

SAINT BRIGID'S GIRLS' NATIONAL SCHOOL

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

It is the aim of the Board of Management and staff of St. Brigid's Girls' National School, Palmerstown, to ensure that all pupils can achieve to the best of their ability in an effective and happy learning environment. School reports and parent/teacher meetings assist in the process required to achieve this aim. Every reasonable endeavour is made to address as quickly as possible, any questions and concerns of parents and guardians.

The Board of Management believes that the questions, concerns and complaints of parents/guardians are best resolved informally between the class teacher and parents/guardians concerned. **Sometimes, a note in the pupil's school journal will be sufficient.** However, it is recognised that informal procedures are not always successful in resolving differences. Therefore, this document sets out both the informal and formal procedures available to resolve complaints and concerns.

Step 1 (Informal)

The parent(s)/guardian(s), who wish to make a complaint or raise a concern, should make an appointment to meet the staff member with a view to resolving the matter.

Step 2 (Informal)

If the matter remains unresolved, the parent(s)/guardian(s) should make an appointment to meet the Principal with a view to resolving the matter. The Principal may, at her discretion, request that the complaint or concern be put in writing.

Step 3 (Formal Letter and Informal Conciliation)

If steps 1 and 2 above have been exhausted without an outcome, which is satisfactory to all parties, the complaint or concerns should be put in writing, by the parent(s)/guardian(s), in a letter addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The letter should contain full details of the nature of the concerns or complaint, names of all those involved and, if possible, indicate the outcome expected.

The Chairperson of the Board of Management will inform the staff member concerned of receipt of the letter and of the nature of its contents. Within 5 days of his/her receipt of the letter, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will meet the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the staff member, with a view to resolving matters amicably and informally. The chairperson of the Board of Management may meet the parties separately and/or together, with a view to reaching a satisfactory outcome for all concerned. Note (i) below applies to meetings held for the purposes of Step 3.

Step 4 (Formal Meeting with the Teacher/Principal)

If, after Step 3, matters remain unresolved, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will give the staff member concerned a full copy of the letter received from the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Chairperson of the Board of Management will then meet the staff member concerned and if, the Chairperson considers it appropriate and/or necessary, the Principal, with a view to resolving matters. This meeting must, in the event of failure of Step 3, take place within 10 days of receipt by the Chairperson of the Board of Management of the letter of complaint referred to at Step 3 above. Note (i) below applies to meetings held for the purposes of Step 4.

Step 5 (Formal Report to and Investigation by the Board of Management)

If matters remain unresolved, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will, within 10 days of the unsuccessful conclusion of Step 4, submit a formal written report to the Board of Management.

If the Board of Management considers, that the concerns and/or complaints of the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not substantiated, the Board of Management will so inform the parties in writing. These letters should reach the parties concerned within 3 school days from the date of the meeting of the Board of Management. The decision of the Board shall be final.

If the Board of Management considers that the matters merit further investigation the following procedures will be invoked:

- The staff member will be informed that the Board of Management are investigating further.
- The staff member will be supplied with a copy of the Chairperson's report to the Board of Management and all other written evidence supporting the complaint or concerns of the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The staff member will be requested to send a written response to the Board of Management, within 5 school days of her receipt of the copy of the Chairperson's report to the Board of Management.
- The staff member should indicate, in her written response, if she wishes to make oral representations to the Board of Management. If so, a meeting will be arranged. The staff member may, if she so wishes, be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting. In the absence of a request from the staff member for such meeting, the Board of Management will assume that the staff member does not require to meet the Board of Management.
- If the Board of Management considers that a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) concerned is either necessary or desirable, they will arrange such a meeting. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may, if (s) he/they so wish, be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- The Board of Management will consider principles of natural justice in deciding whether or not to invite parties to a meeting. Each party will be given equal opportunity to respond to the evidence produced and the case made by the other party or parties.

- All meetings referred to above will take place within 10 school days of the meeting, between the staff member and Chairperson of the Board of Management, held under Step 4.
- When the Board of Management has completed investigating the complaint, the Chairperson shall, within 5 days of the meeting of the Board of Management deciding the matter, write to the parties informing them of the decision of the Board. The decision of the Board of Management will indicate whether the complaints or concerns were wholly or partly substantiated or wholly unfounded and may include recommendations on resolving the issues or avoiding a future reoccurrence of the concerns or complaint.
- The decision of the Board shall be final.

Notes:

- (i) **The Board of Management may nominate another member of the Board to assist the Chairperson in the performance of his/her functions under this Complaints Procedure. The nominated member may accompany the Chairperson to and may participate in any and all meetings held in accordance with Step 3 and Step 4 of this Complaints Procedure.**
- (ii) **These procedures will be reviewed annually.**
- (iii) **The procedures will be replaced in due course when the Minister for Education and Science makes regulations introducing statutory procedures under Section 28 of the Education Act 1998.**
- (iv) **All letters of complaint must be signed. The Board will not deal with anonymous complaints.**
- (V) **While every effort will made to ensure meetings are held at a time which is suitable to both (all) parties, teachers / staff are not contractually obliged to attend meetings outside of school hours.**

Date: _____

Fergus Hayden
Chairperson of the Board of Management

February 2005

Reviewed and amended May 2006 by insertion of Note (i) above.

Reviewed and amended May 2007 by insertion of Note (IV) above.

Reviewed and amended January 2011 by insertion of Note (V) above and other changes.